AUDIT OF NEW SAR INITIATIVES PROGRAM
DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES AND OCEANS / CANADA COAST GUARD
NIF PROJECT – DFO 3/96

SAFETY CAMPAIGN – PERSONAL WATERCRAFT OPERATORS

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Executive Summary

NIF funding of $228,790 was approved in March 1996 to undertake a study of personal watercraft operators' practices and to develop various programs/publicity campaigns to address the safety issue relating to watercraft operations.

Our audit was to determine whether the post project evaluation had been conducted and if the overall project had met the objectives outlined in the original proposal/annex.

The NIF criterion which was audited was not met as there was no post-project evaluation performed to evaluate the project's success against the established objectives. It is to be noted however that the Final Summary Report did address the achievement of the established objectives with the exception of not addressing whether or not the number of watercraft related accidents had been impacted by this project.

This issue is addressed in more detail in this report.

1.0 Introduction

The New Initiatives Fund (NIF), administered by the National Search & Rescue Secretariat (NSS) is designed "to provide funding for projects that will enhance search and rescue (SAR) in Canada." Approved projects are subject to audit as set out in the NIF Guide and the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreed between the NSS and the Sponsoring Department, Province or Territory.

One of the projects selected for a partial audit in 2000/01 was Safety Campaign – Personal Watercraft Operators submitted by Canada Coast Guard / Deparment of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO). The project'soverall objective was to gather information on personal watercraft operators' practices and develop various publicity campaigns and programs to address watercraft safety issues.

The audit, conducted in October / November 2000, was limited to the examination of the post-project evaluation criterion set-out in the 1998 New SAR Initiatives Fund (NIF) Guide. This was accomplished by reviewing NSS and DFO/CCG project records and having discussions with NSS and DFO staff.

The results of our audit are summarized in this report.

2.0 Project Description

With the increasing number of personal watercraft users and consequently watercraft related accidents, the Canadian Coast Guard submitted a proposal to the NSS that specified the following objectives:

- ?? Obtain updated information on the various practices adopted by personal watercraft users.
- ?? Organize a provincial conference on watercraft safety.
- ?? Produce various publicity campaigns regarding watercraft safety which target watercraft users.
- ?? Develop a publicity campaign which would promote educational programs/material to watercraft users.

The initial proposal was accepted by the NSS in March 1996 at a total budget of $228,790 and was subsequently amended and accepted in March 1997. The amended proposal was submitted in order to have the unused 1996/97 funding ($30,830) carried over to the fiscal 1997/98 year end and to take into account the fact that several initiatives had already been undertaken by other organizations which were consistent with the objectives of the initial proposal thereby requiring the Canadian Coast Guard to modify their approach.

Based on the final quarterly report submitted, the project was completed with a surplus of approximately $25K and the surplus was returned to the NSS.

A Final Summary Report for the project was submitted in FY 98/99 which outlined the project's initiatives and accomplishments. In particular, it was noted that the project enabled CCG to identify ways to reduce watercraft accidents, identify how they could reach the various users of watercraft equipment and to develop a course on watercraft safety which was very popular among watercraft users.

3.0 Audit Findings

The findings are summarized by the criteria contained in the NIF Guide.

3.1 Post Project Evaluation

The sponsoring organization undertakes an evaluation of the project's effectiveness against the objectives established and agreed to at the approval stage. An initial evaluation should be carried out within the time allotted in the project's evaluation plan and the findings submitted to the NSS for review and tabling at a subsequent ICSAR meeting.

Findings

?? The approved proposal states that the project's objectives would be to obtain updated information on the various practices adopted by personal watercraft users, organize a provincial conference on watercraft safety, measure the impact of preventive measures on watercraft related accidents and as well, produce various publicity campaigns and develop various programs which would target watercraft users.

?? The Final Summary Report noted that the project enabled to CCG to identify solutions on how to reduce watercraft accidents, identify how they could reach the various users of watercraft equipment and to develop a course on watercraft safety which, according to the project manager, was very popular among watercraft users.

?? The Final Summary Report also contains a section which addressed the project's evaluation criterion. These were very vague and did not set any measurable criteria which could be used to determine whether the project had a positive impact on watercraft related accidents. However, according to the report they were able to obtain statistics and other useful information as part of their project.

?? Per discussion with the Project Manager, other than the Final Summary Report submitted for the 1998-1999 fiscal year, there was no other report submitted which addressed whether or not the project had been successful and had an impact on watercraft related accidents.

Conclusions

The requirement for an evaluation of the project's effectiveness against the agreed objectives has not been fully met as no post-project evaluation was conducted and as a result, a report was not prepared. However, based on the information obtained, the original objectives have been achieved and the activities planned in the proposal/annex were realized.

Recommendation

We recommend that for future projects, a post-project evaluation report be obtained by the sponsoring organization. If the sponsoring organization does not intend to do one, they should inform the NSS in writing as to why such an evaluation will not be performed. The NSS should also follow-up with the project manager if an evaluation has not been submitted within the required time frame established in the NIF Guide.